MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard May 26, 2011

Present: Richard Dana, Robert Ferguson, Jennifer Haskamp, Matt Hill, Rich Laffin, John Manning, David Riehle, Steve Trimble, Diane Trout-Oertel, Mark Thomas, Matt Mazanec

Absent: Renee Hutter (excused)

Staff Present: Amy Spong, Christine Boulware, Becky Willging

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER: 5:02 PM by John Manning (Chair)

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: The agenda was approved as presented. (Dana/Laffin) 11-0

- III. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None were stated. Commissioner Dana said that he met with one of the owners of the property of 546 Marshall last year as a contractor prior to joining the HPC. The owner discussed what they were planning to do and gave Commissioner Dana a tour, but he is not under any contract and did not submit any proposals.
- IV. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chair Manning said that he had a discussion in City Hall about the communications challenges regarding how the HPC role is perceived by the business community.
- V. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS: Staff stated the Jacob Schmidt Brewing Company Historic District was adopted by the City Council at the final reading on May 25. She said that a resolution will go in front of the City Council requesting that they ask the Department of the Interior to certify it for purposes of obtaining historic tax credits for projects within the district this will happen June 8. She said that she has already had a request by Gopher Ethanol, who maintains ownership of the 1980s pump house, asking for input on an awning design. Fort Road Federation is working on a new roof for the office building.

VI. PERMIT REVIEW/PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. 402 Hope Street, Dayton's Bluff Historic District, by Michael Buelow, BB Housing Associates, LLC, for a building permit to rehabilitate the residence to a duplex, restore the façade and recreate the front porch. **HPC File #11-015** (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read the report for 402 Hope Street recommending conditional approval. Staff showed pictures of the property and reviewed areas of interest. Commissioner Mazanec asked staff to clarify which window was proposed to be filled in with glass block. He also asked if the bay in the first floor was completely removed or if it was hidden behind the porch. Staff replied that it was completely removed, and a sliding glass door was put in its place. Commissioner Trimble asked who currently owned the house. Staff replied that the property is owned by the HRA but there is an agreement with the contractor, the specifications are unknown. Commissioner Laffin asked to clarify if one window on the south elevation would need to stay as a casement window, staff replied yes. Staff provided copies of the window schedule and specifications, which were sent in after the staff report was submitted, and will remove the condition which required submittal and approval of those documents by staff.

Michael Buelow from BB Housing Associates approached the Commission. BB Housing is under contract with the City of St. Paul HRA to purchase the property. Their intention is to rehab it as a duplex and rent it to 50% median income families. They have executed a number of these types of projects, 3 last summer, 5 presently, including 402 Hope. All properties were vacant Category 2 or 3. Mr. Buelow addressed the second floor casement egress windows on the north side of the house, stating that his window consultant said that they could not meet egress as double-hungs. He proposed to use Marvin brand window with a horizontal sash element to help it read as a double-hung window. He is proposing to use Marvin or Silver Line brand windows, but he will be rebuilding most of the wood windows. If he needs to do a tilt-in, clad window, it will be Silver Line. He is proposing to re-use the existing storm windows, which do not have a baked enamel finish, and match what's there or re-use what he can. He said that the window proposed for glass block is located in the bathtub/shower area and is set back on the side, and if it is left as a typical window, it can lead to moisture issues and decay.

Chair Manning asked Mr. Buelow if he had ever worked on a property within a historic district, and he replied that he hadn't. Chair Manning asked how Mr. Buelow planned to handle the storm windows. Mr. Buelow said that all of the windows currently have storm windows, and he anticipates those windows being reused. Chair Manning asked Staff Boulware if reusing the storm windows was a concern. Staff replied if the frames stay in place, they have allowed for re-screening or new glass to be put in. Mr. Buelow said that if they end up with the casement windows on the north then there would be internal screens typical of the style. Chair Manning said that the recommendation implied that there might be a way to meet egress using the existing double - hung windows and if not they will default to the casement option. Mr. Buelow agreed that he was willing to make it work. Staff said the goal was to minimize impact to the existing windows, two of which are new openings originally sized to meet egress when the lower sash is up. Mr. Buelow said that if it's agreed that the lower sash meets egress, he is happy to keep it as a double-hung, including the new openings on the back of the house. Chair Manning mentioned the issue with the glass block, and asked Staff to give her perspective. Staff replied they have approved raised window sills in the shower and tub areas, as well as installation of an aluminum window with safety glazing in the sash or a composite window that is still a double-hung and is more of a solid plastic fiber product versus just a clad product. The profiles with new windows don't always look historically appropriate on the outside and they rectify that by using a storm window. Some people use frosted glass for privacy or instead of window coverings. Commissioner Trimble stated that everyone on his block has a window in their bathroom and it is not glass block, which he does not think is necessary. He asked Mr. Buelow why he decided to keep the duplex instead of converting it back to a single-family house, which is what the District Council has been hoping to work with HRA on to increase homeownership. Mr. Buelow said there was a strong resistance to having single-family homes as rental properties rehabbed as rental properties, people want it for-sale. The only properties BB Housing rehab for rentals are properties that are currently zoned as multi-family because they want to work with the neighborhood, which is morning willing to support rehabbing multifamilies but resist restoring single-family homes into rental property.

Commissioner Mazanec said he lives around the corner from this property and is excited to see the exterior work on the porch. He asked Mr. Buelow how far off the dimensions of the north windows are to meet egress, because often times in older properties and windows are noted as not meeting egress, but are fairly close, applicants can go in front of the Legislative Hearing officer to ask for an exception. Mr. Buelow said he did not

have the dimensions, but he is willing to propose them as double-hung windows for the permit and acknowledge what the egress opening is. Commissioner Dana asked Mr. Buelow how he would trim the glass block window on the interior. Mr. Buelow said they usually use subway tile at a 6-foot radius above the tub, so the window would be within the field of the subway tile. There would not be a jamb or a casing, and the exterior would be trimmed-out like the other windows and he would be open to putting a storm screen on it to help with the continuity. Commissioner Trout-Oertel asked Mr. Buelow if he intended to change the size of the opening. Mr. Buelow said they plan to raise the sill because it sits too low to the tub-line, and asked staff to show a picture of the window, which looks like it used to be a side door before the addition was put on there. Chair Manning asked if it was possible to do a regular window with privacy glass on the exterior and glass block on the interior. Commissioner Laffin said that it is possible to use a piece of etched tempered glass to preserve the look of the double-hung on the outside but have the weather-tight seal on the inside. Commissioner Dana asked when the addition was built at the rear. Staff said it was prior to 1903. Commissioner Laffin said he was concerned about the four egress windows on the south side. Staff replied that the new egress policy doesn't comment on storm windows, the contractor is only required to comply with the egress opening specs on the primary sash. Technically someone can put in a casement window with a meeting rail and a storm window on the outside to look like the others, but it wouldn't be operable. Mr. Buelow said he didn't think it was possible to put in a casement window with a storm screen and have it meet egress, but he could put a storm window over the existing double-hung if the lower sash opening meets egress. Staff said that if that's the case they don't measure the storm window, they only measure the opening on the primary sash. Most historic houses have the full wood storm windows on the exterior for the winter, with a window on the interior that meets egress. Commissioner Laffin noted the mixed smooth and textured fibercement siding and asked Mr. Buelow about what he will replace the deteriorated sections with. Mr. Buelow said he would continue the fiber-cement siding because that's what's on the house now, though he would prefer smooth. Commissioner Dana asked how much of the siding will be replaced. Mr. Buelow said 10-20% - not large areas. Commissioner Laffin asked if they had resolved the issue about the two new rear windows being double-hung and meeting egress. Chair Manning said that the applicant seemed comfortable with staff recommendation that they can be double-hung and meet egress.

Staff did not receive any written testimony. The public hearing was closed. Commissioner Laffin motioned staff recommendation items 1 and 2, and 4-12. Commissioner Mazanec seconded the motion, with an amendment to the language in item 5. Commissioner Dana asked why item 3 was not included. Staff replied it was because the window schedule and information requested under item 3 was received. The motion was passed 11-0.

B. 546 Marshall Avenue, Hill Historic District, by Bob Lunning, Lunning Wende Associates, for a building permit to rehabilitate the front porches and replace missing design elements. **HPC File #11-016** (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read the report for recommending conditional approval. Staff showed pictures of the house and described the significant details. The rear porch was reviewed as an after-the-fact application by a prior owner. Commissioner Laffin noted from the pictures that it is difficult to integrate downspouts with architectural details and wondered if the architect was clever in doing so. Commissioner Mazanec noted that there weren't any running spandrels on the top of the front porch where the bay is compared to the left

side, and wondered if that was originally intentional. Staff replied that the original porch was built up with a grander multi-piece cornice with dentils and other details, which is probably where the inspiration was drawn to build up the wall and meet building code at the second floor and not have a "play pen" affect by constructing a tall balustrade. Commissioner Laffin asked staff to further describe what is meant by "grip-able metal pipe rail" as noted in Finding 7. Staff replied that typically in the 1920s, people installed a1 ¼ or a 1 ½ inch pipe with elbow joints to hold on to, which can be painted dark to not interfere with the design detail. Chair Manning asked if staff is proposing the metal rail instead of wood because of exposure to weather. Staff replied that adding any balustrade to the detail would be distracting, and that the wing wall approach to what was there is closer to what was typically the design of the front steps. A new railing would have to be constructed at a height to meet code which would be much taller than the original balustrade height, so adding grip-able pipe rail would allow the eye to read the porch as it was historically. Commissioner Ferguson said that the pipe rail has the option of being invisible and reversible.

The applicant, Bob Lunning, approached the Commission and introduced the owners of the property, Neil Miller and Richard Pierce, who were also in attendance. Mr. Lunning gave an historic background of the property, and claimed that the house at 546 Marshall is the architect John H. Coxhead's most prominent house in St. Paul. He said that he wasn't sure if Coxhead was the architect of the two-story porch, and that the porches were not put together in a unified way; however it was typical of the architect to design second-story porches. He is fine with moving the railings to the side rather than down the center of the front steps. He explained that the reason for proposing it at the center was to preserve the experience of walking down and seeing the entire grand staircase. Commissioner Dana asked what the applicant proposed to do about the gutters and downspouts. Mr. Lunning replied that the water currently runs off the roofs and down to the ground; may have to do rebuilding of the lower porch roof, and the intention would be to continue the practice to divert the water from over the stairway and allow the water to fall to the ground. Commissioner Dana asked if there was a code issue with the balusters on the front porch if there were to be a commercial use on the property. Mr. Lunning said potentially, but they don't now if the balusters are original to the front porch or not, though they have details that relate to the spandrels. There are missing pieces, but they plan to fill in with matching pieces. Staff stated it is good that there are existing railings and to classify the proposed work as a repair. Mr. Lunning said he would rather repair them than replace them.

Chair Manning asked if there was intent for commercial use of the building. Mr. Lunning said potentially, but the current owners are not sure what they will do with building; it may remain residential or may have a different use. Commissioner Ferguson asked where the architect was from originally. Mr. Lunning said he thought he was from the East Coast, having apprenticed in Boston. Commissioner Riehle asked what college the architect studied at in Virginia. Mr. Lunning said it was Virginia Union University, and designed nine buildings there in the 1890s. Commissioner Trimble asked if the historic information presented by the applicant at the hearing about the architect is recorded anywhere. Staff replied that the National Register nomination for the college would have a biography of the architect. Chair Manning asked if the information is gathered in a way that goes into the file. Staff replied that it goes into the address file. Commissioner Trout-Oertel said that there is a website about St. Paul architects, and it would be good to add the information to that. Mr. Lunning said he found a thesis paper on Coxhead that referenced the house as being the architect's best residential work. Commissioner Dana asked Mr. Lunning if he exhausted the sources for photographs. Mr. Lunning said

that he, the HPC staff, and the homeowners have looked in various locations, but they are not available. Staff asked if the architect or owners checked the Northwest Architectural Archives. Mr. Lunning said he would check there. Commissioner Laffin directed a comment to the homeowners that the only regrettable thing about the property is the concrete block wall with the high piers and concrete caps, but would encourage them to look at that and perhaps lower caps to an appropriate scale. Staff did not receive any written testimony.

Chair Manning closed the public hearing and asked for a motion. Commissioner Trout-Oertel motioned to approve the application with staff recommendations. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion. Commissioner Dana said that the amount of detail in the plans shows a remarkable effort to replicate what was there. Commissioner Trimble asked for the name of the original owner. Staff replied that it was Lawler. The motion was passed 10-0-1 (Dana abstaining).

VII. NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION: There were not any business or discussion items introduced.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS: There were not any old business items to discuss.

IX. ADJOURN: 6:20 P.M.

Submitted by: B. Willging